United Nations A/55/PV.86

General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

86th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 19 December 2000, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 17 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(h) Appointment of members of the Committee on Conferences

Note by the Secretary-General (A/55/108)

The President: As indicated in document A/55/108, since the terms of office of Argentina, the Bahamas, Belgium, Benin, Georgia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Lesotho will expire on 21 December 2000, it is necessary for the President of the General Assembly to appoint, during the current session, seven members to fill the resulting vacancies. The members so appointed will serve for a period of three years beginning on 1 January 2001.

After consultations with the Chairmen of the groups of African States, Asian States, Eastern European States, Latin American and Caribbean States, as well as Western European and other States, I have appointed Argentina, Benin, Finland, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Peru and Sierra Leone as members of the Committee on Conferences, with effect from 1 January 2001.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of these appointments?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (h) of agenda item 17?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 49

The situation in East Timor during its transition to independence

The President: It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the provisional agenda of the fifty-sixth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 49.

Agenda items 20 (*continued*) **and 46**

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(d) Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan

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00-80513 (E)

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/55/348, A/55/393 and A/55/633)

Letter from the Secretary-General (A/55/548)

Draft resolution (A/55/L.62/Rev.1)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/55/698)

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Germany to introduce draft resolution A/55/L.62/Rev.1.

Mr. Kastrup (Germany): I am pleased to introduce a draft resolution on Afghanistan under items 46 and 20 (d) of the agenda. As in previous years, more than 80 countries participated in the negotiations. I should like to thank them all for their valuable contributions and considerable efforts, which have helped to shape the text that is presented today. I would also like to express my gratitude to all countries that have sponsored this draft resolution.

I should like to announce that since the publication of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Brazil, Egypt, the Dominican Republic and Peru.

Our intention during the negotiation of the draft resolution was to maintain the consensus it has enjoyed in previous years. However, this year it was particularly difficult to obtain consensus, as countries strongly differed in their assessment of the Secretary-General's report of 20 November 2000 on the situation in Afghanistan.

Germany, for one, fully supports all paragraphs of the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security. As mediator and facilitator, however, we realized that this year no consensus was possible on a draft resolution which included the full endorsement of the Secretary-General's report. In addition, important sponsors of last year's resolution felt they had to change their position within days. Other important sponsors of last year's resolution seriously considered withdrawing their sponsorship.

Our reluctance to follow the requests of several delegations not to endorse the report was ultimately overcome when Mr. Francesc Vendrell, the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, informed us that he strongly favoured consensus. Mr. Vendrell stressed that he needed the cooperation of all countries and parties on the ground. As it has always been our intention to strengthen and support the work of the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, his opinion paved the way for consensus. Today we are again in a position to present a draft resolution which sends a strong message to the warring Afghan parties and to all States concerned that it is the will of the international community that peace return to Afghanistan.

I share the view of the Secretary-General that the year 2000 has been an exceptionally difficult year for Afghans. Despite repeated international appeals by the Security Council and the General Assembly not to launch military offensives, both Afghan parties continued fighting. They still seem to believe, against all evidence to the contrary, in a military solution.

Exactly one year ago, I called on both Afghan parties to focus their energies on the search for peace and on the reconstruction of their country. Unfortunately, they did not heed my call. The offensives launched by the Taliban in the summer of this year aggravated the already serious humanitarian and human rights situation. This has led to the massive loss of human lives; refugee flows; harassment; the forcible displacement of innocent civilians, in particular women and children; and the arbitrary detention of civilians.

In view of this grave situation, the draft resolution once again calls upon all Afghan parties to immediately cease all armed hostilities, to renounce the use of force and to engage in a political dialogue under United Nations auspices. With all due caution, we welcome the agreement reached by the Taliban and the United Front on 2 November to enter into a process of dialogue without preconditions in order to bring to an end the Afghan conflict by political means. We wish Mr. Vendrell all success and the good luck he needs to implement this agreement, which is purely procedural in nature and which can only constitute a first step on a long road towards peace.

It is not unknown that the fighting in Afghanistan is prolonged by the foreign military support the Afghan parties receive. On the side of each warring faction there is continued foreign involvement. There is not

only a supply of arms, ammunition and military equipment, but also the presence and involvement of foreign military personnel on the ground. The draft that is being introduced today strongly condemns the continuing foreign military support to the Afghan parties and calls upon all States to take resolute measures to prohibit their military personnel from planning and participating in combat operations in Afghanistan, to immediately withdraw their personnel and to ensure that the supply of ammunition and other war-making materials is halted. I shall not mince words: it is this form of interference by certain Governments in the internal affairs of Afghanistan that enables and encourages both factions to pursue their military aims. Unless this interference is stopped, the current Afghan struggle will continue.

In accordance with previous resolutions on Afghanistan, this draft reiterates that the main responsibility for a peaceful solution to the conflict lies with the Afghan parties. It also reiterates that the United Nations must continue to play the central role in international efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution of the Afghan conflict. The United Nations has to facilitate the political process leading towards the goal of national reconciliation and a lasting political settlement in which all parties to the conflict in all segments of Afghan society have to participate.

Germany has always supported the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan with a view to ensuring the Mission's primary role in the United Nations peacekeeping activities in Afghanistan. We hope that these activities will lead to a durable ceasefire and to the formation of a broad-based, multi-ethnic and fully representative government. Two years ago the General Assembly's resolution on Afghanistan endorsed the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a separate Civil Affairs Unit within the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA). The Unit's primary objective was to deter grave violations of human rights and to promote respect for minimum humanitarian standards in the future. Today we welcome the deployment of UNSMA's Civil Affairs Unit to six cities in Afghanistan. We also welcome the ongoing dialogue on political and human rights issues with high-ranking representatives of local and regional authorities of both Afghan sides.

Germany supports the intention of the Secretary-General to strengthen the political capacity of UNSMA and to increase the number of its military advisers. We also support the activities of groups of interested States, in particular the "six plus two" group, to use their influence in a constructive manner to promote peace in Afghanistan. We welcome the various peace initiatives of non-United Nations actors, including those of various non-warring Afghan parties and independent Afghan personalities, calling for an end to the fighting.

It is indeed a very sad duty to report to the Assembly that, once again, our hopes for an improvement of the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan have been in vain. On the contrary, the situation continued to deteriorate in 2000. Twenty-one years of uninterrupted armed conflict have created dismal socio-economic conditions for the large majority of the Afghan population. We are once again distressed to see that this year's summer offensive led to further needless and deliberate destruction of means of livelihood and of infrastructure, thereby creating new flows of refugees and internally displaced persons. In addition, the country is now facing the worst drought in recent history. The effects of the drought are expected to become even more severe in 2001 and will affect about 12 million Afghans, 3 million to 4 million severely. The war, the drought, searing poverty and a dysfunctional economy with mass unemployment, aggravated by a lack of even the most basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, will place Afghanistan at the very bottom of the scale in terms of human development next year.

In this context, please allow me to stress the vital importance of continued humanitarian assistance by the international community for the Afghan population, and the central role that the United Nations and its agencies play in the provision of aid to that country. Germany commends the United Nations for its efforts in Afghanistan, but remains, at the same time, deeply concerned about the conditions under which humanitarian assistance has to be delivered in the country. Though some progress has been made in the past year, acts of interference by the warring parties and restricted access to affected populations remain a serious matter of concern. This draft resolution stresses the importance that the international community attaches to having all the warring parties show greater respect for the rights of all civilians to humanitarian assistance.

Germany is also deeply worried about the continuing threats to the safety and security of

humanitarian personnel in Afghanistan. We strongly condemn recent acts of violence and intimidation against United Nations personnel, in particular the brutal murder of seven Afghan employees of the United Nations-supported mine awareness programme by unidentified gunmen. In this respect, we call upon the Taliban authorities to fully respect and implement the Supplementary Protocol to the Memorandum of Understanding on the security of United Nations personnel.

Unfortunately, this year we again received new reports on the ongoing use of landmines in Afghanistan. We deeply deplore this practice. Germany attaches highest priority to the complete halt of landmine usage. The contamination of large areas by landmines and unexploded ordinance causes unnecessary suffering and constitutes a major hindrance to the recovery and development of Afghanistan and a serious impediment to the repatriation of refugees and internally displaced people.

Germany remains deeply concerned about the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, notably in areas under control of the Taliban. Gender discrimination continues to be systematically applied. In this respect, we condemn the decree issued in July by the Taliban authorities restricting the employment of women by the United Nations, with the exception of the health sector. Though it has not been fully implemented, this draft resolution strongly rejects the decree on a matter of principle. The draft resolution also states very clearly that the international community does not accept the exclusion of women and girls from public life. At the same time, we note reports by the United Nations organizations in Afghanistan that some progress was made concerning the access of women and girls to education and health care. The situation, however, is far from satisfactory. We therefore encourage all parties, in particular the Taliban, to make further steps towards granting women their internationally guaranteed basic rights.

The conflict in Afghanistan has international implications for the neighbouring countries, as well as far beyond the region. Let me summarize the messages of this draft resolution.

First, we ask both Afghan factions to stop fighting immediately and to engage in a political dialogue without delay and preconditions.

Secondly, we ask all countries involved in the conflict to stop their military support to all sides to the conflict.

Thirdly, we ask all Afghan factions to stop the gross violations of human rights, in particular with regard to women and girls.

Fourthly, the continuing illegal drug activities in Afghanistan and the trafficking of illegal drugs from Afghanistan, often in association with arms trafficking and other criminal activities, present a substantial threat to neighbouring countries and have serious negative implications in other parts of the world. This draft therefore welcomes the adoption of a Regional Action Plan by the "six plus two" group aimed at eliminating illicit drug production in and drug trafficking from Afghanistan and strongly calls upon all Afghan parties to halt all illegal drug activities.

Fifthly, Afghan territory continues to be used to shelter and train terrorists. The Taliban continue to provide a safe haven to international terrorists, including Usama bin Laden. They also continue to allow him and others associated with him to operate a network of terrorist training camps and to use Afghanistan as the base from which to sponsor international terrorist operations. Germany deplores the Taliban's failure to comply with Security Council resolution 1267 (1999) one year after its adoption. Today, the Security Council is about to impose tighter sanctions against the Taliban. Following this line, the draft of this General Assembly resolution strongly demands that the Taliban refrain from providing safe haven to international terrorists, cease the recruitment of terrorists, close down terrorist training camps inside Afghanistan and take effective measures to ensure that the territory under its control is not used to sponsor international terrorist operations.

Sixthly, the humanitarian situation, aggravated by the worst draught in 30 years and by the destruction and criminalization of the economy, has deteriorated so dramatically that, as the Secretary-General has said, "most Afghans are reduced to eking out a 'bare bones' existence" (*A/55/633, para. 80*). We sincerely hope that this situation will not deteriorate any further in the future and we would like to send the message to the Afghan people that we continue to care about them, their human rights and their suffering after more than 20 years of war.

In concluding, I should like to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General, to the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan, and especially to the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Francesc Vendrell, for their tireless efforts to promote the peace process for Afghanistan. I should also like to take this opportunity to thank all United Nations staff members and other humanitarian relief workers who have been or still are working in Afghanistan for their excellent work in extreme and often discouraging conditions.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, as well as Liechtenstein, as a European Free Trade Association country of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

For more than 20 years, the Afghan people have been the hostages of a war with alarming human consequences. Weary of a civil war of which it is the main victim, the civilian population is at last aspiring to the restoration of peace. In this context, a threefold challenge presents itself: an end to the fighting, defence of human rights and the quest for a political solution to the conflict.

The continuation of the armed conflict is the primary source of concern to the European Union. It must be stressed that this conflict is extremely destabilizing, not only within the territory of Afghanistan but for the whole region. The European Union is particularly concerned about the suffering the fighting has caused for the civilian population and condemns any armed action directed at civilians. With humanitarian conditions steadily deteriorating, the increase in the number of displaced persons and refugees is a major destabilizing factor. The European Union calls for an immediate end to enforced displacement, and appeals for people to be freely allowed to return home.

Furthermore, this conflict is fuelled by the proceeds of drug-trafficking, which the European Union vigorously condemns. While it notes that the Taliban issued a decree on 28 July 2000 completely prohibiting the cultivation of the opium poppy, it is watching very closely to see how this decree will be enforced. In this context, it urges the Taliban to implement that decree.

The European Union calls on the parties to the conflict to refrain from providing any assistance for the funding, training or protection of terrorist organizations. In this connection, it urges the Taliban to comply with Security Council resolution 1267 (1999) and to expel Usama bin Laden in accordance with the terms of that resolution.

The tragedy of the armed struggle is compounded by contempt for the most elementary rights. The European Union deplores the continued flouting of human rights and condemns the persistence of summary executions, in particular the massacre of prisoners at Samangan last May. It also condemns arbitrary detention and the very unsafe conditions in which detainees are held.

The European Union notes that the Afghan conflict gives free rein to large-scale religious and ethnic persecution. In this regard, the ethnic dimension of the conflict is especially worrying, as it appears to be one of the main reasons for the continued fighting. In addition to condemning such acts of violence, the European Union denounces the continuing discrimination against women and girls. It calls on the Afghan factions, particularly the Taliban, to recognize, protect and promote equal rights for men and women, notably as regards access to education, employment and health care. In this connection, it condemns the firman issued in July 2000 restricting the employment of Afghan women by the United Nations and non-governmental organizations.

The European Union has been the principal donor of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan for many years. It deplores the worrying deterioration in the humanitarian situation in the country. Furthermore, it appeals to the Taliban to honour their pledge to cooperate fully with the United Nations on humanitarian issues. As the conditions for providing humanitarian aid are particularly difficult, we call on the parties to the conflict to guarantee free and unimpeded access to the civilian population.

This conflict cannot be resolved by military means. The European Union therefore urges the parties to seek a political solution. In this context, it calls on the parties to observe a ceasefire. It supports the efforts of Mr. Vendrell, the Personal Representative of the

Secretary-General for Afghanistan, to move the peace process forward. It notes the exchange of separate letters of 30 October 2000 in which the Taliban and the United Front agreed to launch a process of dialogue through the good offices of the Secretary-General. It calls on the parties to commit themselves fully to this process of dialogue in order to restore peace and bring about reconciliation at an early date. Lastly, the European Union takes note of the conclusions reached at the meetings in Geneva and Montreux, and supports the prospects for the formation of a multi-ethnic, broadly representative Government that could be based in particular on the *loya jirgah* — the traditional Afghan mechanism of representation.

The European Union reaffirms its deep commitment to respect for the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan. It deplores interference in that country's internal affairs by non-Afghans engaged in military activities, as referred to in paragraphs 23 and 81 of the Secretary-General's report. The European Union wishes to stress that it fully endorses the observations and recommendations in Mr. Kofi Annan's report.

Finally, it offers its firm support, as well as its sponsorship, to the draft resolution prepared by Germany, which Ambassador Dieter Kastrup introduced so eloquently. It is pleased that it will be possible for the Assembly to adopt the draft resolution by consensus. The draft resolution deals in detail with acts of violence on which we cannot compromise, and with the political solutions that the international community is ready to offer the parties. It attests, this year yet again, to the abiding attention that the members of this Assembly must devote to resolving a conflict that has gone on for far too long.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to begin by expressing my thanks to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the various aspects of the situation in Afghanistan. This report reflects, inter alia, the sustained and dedicated efforts of the Secretary-General himself, as well as those of his Personal Representative, Mr. Vendrell, and his colleagues in the Department for Political Affairs and the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan, to bring about a political settlement to the Afghan crisis. I commend the Secretary-General and Mr. Francesc Vendrell for their efforts, and reiterate the full readiness of my Government to extend all possible support and assistance to them in the difficult task ahead.

It is very unfortunate that during the year that followed the previous debate on Afghanistan in the General Assembly, the situation in that country showed no signs of improvement. The Taliban persisted in their futile search for military gain and rendered all efforts aimed at the restoration of peace and security in Afghanistan fruitless. As a result, the plight of the Afghan people continued unabated, stability in the region remained elusive, various threats against the security of the countries surrounding Afghanistan persisted and the whole world continued to feel threatened due to threats originating from Afghanistan.

During this period, we noticed no practical change in the fighting cycle in Afghanistan. The Taliban pursued their bellicose and intransigent policy on the ground. Based on this perennial policy and with total contempt for international demands, the Taliban leadership continued their military activities during this past summer and tried cynically to use the last moments before the cold season set in to launch their periodic offensives. As is underscored in paragraph 23 of the Secretary-General's report (A/55/633), in this year's season of fighting,

> "The Taliban ... took the initiative from the outset. The season's full-scale fighting started in the north of Kabul with two vigorous offensives by the Taliban forces on 1 and 9 July".

The defensive counterattacks by the forces of the Islamic State of Afghanistan that resulted in the recapturing of main territory lost to the Taliban reminded us once more of the futility of the military exercise.

We remain convinced that any military victory and conquest of territory in Afghanistan, which is a multi-ethnic society, are extremely short-lived and lead nowhere. The Taliban's militarist policy and illusion of the possibility of settling the complex crisis in Afghanistan through the barrel of a gun have only led to a worsening of the situation and impeded any progress in negotiations. In the final analysis, any eventual military dominance over ethnic groups in such a multi-ethnic society could not be but a recipe for further bloody conflicts.

Based on the historical facts, while ups and downs on the ground and on the military fronts are a

constant likelihood, no military development could drastically and definitively change the situation and act as a means to bring about peace, even an imposed one, in Afghanistan. The time when military conquest of territory could determine the outcome is far behind us, and the realities of Afghan society do not allow the domination of one ethnic group over the others.

It is a source of deep concern that the recent offensives by the Taliban, similar to those in the past, created enormous hardship for the civilians in the north-east of Afghanistan. According to the reports by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the heavy fighting between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance in north-east Afghanistan has uprooted about 150,000 people. The latest report of the Secretary-General provides more information on the plight of the Afghan civilians who were forced to leave their homes due to the recent fighting in the central and northern regions.

What is much more alarming is the way the Taliban treat the innocent inhabitants of the conquered territories. The Secretary-General, in paragraph 78 of his annual report (A/55/633), reiterates that

> "There are numerous reports of Taliban troops deliberately destroying, burning and looting homes and assets essential for survival. The deliberate targeting and harming of civilians has a long history in the Afghan conflict and points to the urgent need to hold accountable those who are responsible for such heinous crimes."

The Secretary-General goes on to express great concern over reports about summary executions, arbitrary detention and forced labour in detention camps.

With the winter setting in, the situation of those persons driven from their homes by the Taliban and those already displaced is getting worse. In view of the inhumanely harsh and ethnically biased treatment of the local population by the Taliban, it is very difficult to envisage any return of the displaced persons to their homes as long as the area is under Taliban occupation.

Despite the fact that the principles of assistance programming have been regularly challenged by the Taliban authorities — as the Secretary-General stresses in his report — we believe that there is a pressing need for the international community to maintain its commitment to the Afghan people and spare no effort to provide them with humanitarian assistance.

My country's interests are best served through the restoration of peace and tranquillity in Afghanistan. Trafficking in drugs, terrorism and extremism emanating from ongoing conflict in Afghanistan are creating instability in the region and constant threats against the national security and interests of countries surrounding Afghanistan, including my own country. Traffickers have turned the Iranian regions bordering Afghanistan and Pakistan into a landing place for illicit drugs smuggled from neighbouring eastern countries, with the intention of transiting the illicit cargo to consumer markets in Europe and the Persian Gulf States.

My country has been engaged for years in a costly war against heavily armed drug traffickers from certain eastern countries. This illicit and inhumane business is of a complex and transnational nature, and the wide range of organized crime that it creates is disrupting normal life in eastern Iran and adversely affecting the rest of the country. During the last year, 174 Iranian anti-drug personnel have lost their lives in confrontation with armed traffickers, and the estimated cost of this year's anti-drug campaign surpasses $1 billion.

In last week's armed conflicts with traffickers in Khorasan province, Iranian military and enforcement agencies released 87 hostages taken by drug traffickers.

The areas under Taliban control remain the world's largest supplier of opium, and they do not show any sign that they have decided to do away with the scourge of drugs. A slight decline of 10 per cent in opium poppy cultivation in the area does not live up to the Taliban decree of September 1999 to reduce opium poppy cultivation by one third. Moreover, if we take the severe drought and its impact on this year's planting into account, we may conclude that nothing serious has been done by the Taliban to curb the drug business. This means that the Taliban are intent on relying on income generated from illicit drugs for financing their war-making activities, and therefore the situation inside Afghanistan and in the neighbouring countries may continue to worsen.

In this respect, we should welcome the high-level meetings of the "six plus two" group, held at the United Nations Headquarters, and the active role played by this group, leading, among other things, to

the adoption of a regional action plan aimed at eliminating illicit drug production.

We believe that a political settlement of the Afghan conflict aimed at the establishment of a broad-based, multi-ethnic and representative Government is the only way to restore a lasting and comprehensive peace in Afghanistan. And peace, in turn, is the only remedy to the many ills that plague the Afghan people and their neighbours. Thus, we place great hope in efforts undertaken by the United Nations. The recent commitment expressed by the Afghan parties to enter into a process of dialogue represents a glimmer of hope for all and, above all, for the suffering Afghan people.

Meanwhile, we agree with the Secretary-General's statement, in paragraph 14 of document A/55/633, that

> "clearly the criterion for participation in the shaping of Afghanistan's future cannot be the holding of weapons, but that the non-fighting Afghans, both inside and outside the country, have much to contribute and need to be involved in deciding the ultimate destiny of their country."

As to the requirements for a final settlement of the conflict in Afghanistan, in our opinion it is first essential that the warring parties admit and recognize at the outset that in Afghanistan's multi-ethnic society there is a pressing and unavoidable need for a multi-ethnic, broad-based, representative and all-inclusive Government.

Secondly, good faith is a must in any negotiations. This, in turn, requires that the parties demonstrate political will. The evidence has thus far been indicative of a lack of such political will on the part of the Taliban. Over the past few years, the Taliban leadership has repeatedly resorted to a variety of tactics in an attempt to buy time and wait for the fighting season to set in. We hope that the Taliban are politically willing this time to abide by their commitment to negotiate in good faith.

Thirdly, we all need to understand and accept that the frenetic quest by the Taliban to resolve the problem by military means is absurd and can lead to no solution. With that in mind, it is regrettable that in the course of the recent offensives, the issue of the engagement of non-Afghan nationals on the side of Taliban forces became even more prominent. This is one of the issues of great concern, and we believe that this is an enduring and dangerous element that can lead to a spread of the conflict beyond Afghan borders.

Fourthly, given the record of the Taliban, the international community should remain alert at all times and oversee the process closely. It is essential that the international community avoid sending signals that could be wrongly interpreted by the warring parties. It is also essential that the world community, and the United Nations representing it, be prepared to act whenever it deems it necessary to deprive the belligerent and intransigent party from the means it needs to further its military and diplomatic objectives at the cost of continued suffering for the Afghan people and instability in the region.

Over the past few years, my country has tried to engage the Taliban in a positive way. To that end, the Iranian Government undertook to open two border crossing points into areas controlled by the Taliban; to deliver among other things, wheat and flour to Afghans when they needed it most; and to exchange numerous technical delegations between the two sides with a view to tackling various pressing issues. At the same time, we believe that while we try to engage the Taliban and further the peace process, the need to address certain pressing and urgent issues — such as terrorism, extremism, opium poppy cultivation and drug-trafficking in the areas controlled by the Taliban — cannot, and should not, be placed on hold. Those are issues of great concern to Afghanistan's neighbours and to the international community. If the Taliban are indeed sincere in their commitment to the peace process, they have to take immediate steps to address those concerns. The international community should hold the Taliban accountable for those issues and continue to address them in parallel with the political process.

In view of the most recent threats, we consider it to be quite cynical to turn the peace process and international humanitarian assistance into a shield for thwarting rightful actions contemplated by the international community aimed at putting an end to intransigence and belligerency. We believe that the Taliban should not be allowed to use the peace process and humanitarian assistance as a cover to escape accountability for illicit drugs and terrorism.

The issue of the tragic murders by Taliban forces of the staff of the Consulate General of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the correspondent of the Islamic

Republic News Agency (IRNA) at Mazar-e-Sharif in August 1998 is still pending and remains unresolved. As the international community and the Security Council itself are fully aware, the Taliban stubbornly continue to disregard the rules of international law and have yet to implement Security Council resolution 1214 (1998), which condemned that crime and, in paragraph 5, called upon the Taliban

> "to cooperate with the United Nations in investigating these crimes with a view to prosecuting those responsible".

I would like to emphasize that the Islamic Republic of Iran is determined vigorously to pursue this matter to a conclusion in which justice is served. We remain hopeful that the United Nations will continue its valuable efforts in that regard.

We are pleased to sponsor draft resolution A/55/L.62/Rev.1, which highlights the international community's commitment to addressing the Afghan conflict. We hope that the clear message contained in the draft resolution, which is sponsored by about 80 Member States, is heard by those who are blocking a peaceful settlement of this conflict. I would also like to place on record our appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Germany and his colleagues for the excellent work they did in bringing about this draft resolution.

Mr. Smith (Australia): The Australian Government strongly supports international efforts to bring the long-running conflict in Afghanistan to an early and lasting resolution. We continue to urge all factions involved in the conflict to halt violence, conclude a durable ceasefire and form a viable Government that represents the interests of the Afghan people. We also call upon all parties in Afghanistan to adhere to universal human rights standards, particularly with respect to women and girls. We call upon the Taliban to comply fully with the provisions of Security Council resolution 1267 (1999).

Australia supports efforts by the United Nations, including through the "six plus two" group and the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Francesc Vendrell, towards realizing a settlement that is representative of the interests of all Afghan communities. Australia encourages discussions among all neighbouring countries of Afghanistan, recognizing that a comprehensive solution requires their cooperation.

Australia's support for peace and reconciliation is given practical expression in the provision of Australian aid to Afghanistan, in which the protection and promotion of human rights are key issues. Afghan women have been a main focus of Australian aid, and all projects supported by Australia have been in accordance with the important United Nations principle that women and girls should participate in, and benefit from, aid projects.

In supporting and sponsoring draft resolution A/55/L.62/Rev.1, Australia wishes to draw particular attention to the ongoing plight of the estimated 2.6 million Afghan refugees living in the countries neighbouring Afghanistan. We also want to draw attention to the urgent need to find durable solutions for them. Those 2.6 million refugees make up the largest single refugee group in the world.

Australia commends the efforts of the Governments of Iran and of Pakistan, which together have shouldered the major part of the significant task of providing asylum to Afghan refugees. Australia acknowledges that providing that assistance represents a significant diversion of resources from pressing national development needs in both Iran and Pakistan. In recognition of this, Australia is currently considering the provision of greater levels of assistance, focusing particularly on the problems of the movement of refugees other people throughout the region. We call upon other members of the international community to increase the level of support provided to refugee assistance undertaken in those countries.

Australia strongly supports enhanced and better coordinated efforts to address the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. Such efforts are essential to minimizing the movement of people out of Afghanistan and creating conditions favourable to voluntary return. In response to this need, Australia recently earmarked 26.8 million Australian dollars for expenditure over four years on aid activities aimed at addressing the situation of Afghan and Iraqi refugees; 1.7 million dollars have already been provided for drought and food aid to Afghanistan through the World Food Programme, and a further 500,000 Australian dollars have been allocated to landmine awareness and demining projects. A central goal of that assistance is to help people remain in their homes rather than being forced to leave and join the already large population of displaced persons in the region.

The need for an increased commitment by the international community to support initiatives to find durable solutions for Afghan refugees is becoming critical. In the light of changing circumstances within Afghanistan and consequent changes in protection needs, greater efforts in the areas of registration and refugee status determination are necessary to determine the most appropriate durable solution for displaced Afghans.

The appropriate solution for the majority of Afghans currently displaced in the region is repatriation. The international community needs to support this by providing humanitarian and development assistance to ensure safe, dignified and sustainable return for those people that elect to return voluntarily and for those people determined not to require protection under international law. For a small minority, local integration or resettlement to a third country will be a more appropriate response to their particular protection needs. The international community should support those outcomes by providing assistance to countries of first asylum for local integration and by ensuring that adequate resettlement places are available. The provision of resettlement places in particular is essential if the international community wishes to continue to manage the movement of refugees throughout the world in an orderly manner and to dissuade people from using the services of people smugglers.

Australia strongly urges other nations to continue supporting the humanitarian needs of the Afghan people, both in Afghanistan and in neighbouring countries, and looks to mechanisms such as the Afghanistan Support Group to ensure that those efforts are coordinated. Failure to do this will result in further dislocation for these people and will encourage some to seek solutions through illegal immigration, with its associated dangers and costs.

Mr. Granovsky (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation is gravely concerned at the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan, where periods of calm are followed by resumptions of increasingly fierce hostilities. The civil war that has been dragging on for many years has caused the people of Afghanistan untold suffering. It has caused an enormous number of deaths, the forced migration of millions of refugees and displaced persons and gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. As a result, the country has been divided into camps of warring factions; it has been set back decades and has been excluded from normal international discourse.

The General Assembly and the Security Council have repeatedly adopted decisions clearly stating the Taliban movement's responsibility for the continuing armed conflict in Afghanistan, for having torpedoed the Afghan peace process, for having grossly violated international humanitarian law and human rights and for illegally producing and trafficking in drugs. All of those destructive factors and the Taliban leadership's responsibility for them have once again been set out clearly in the report of the Secretary-General, entitled "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security" (A/55/633).

The international community's tireless efforts to involve the Taliban in the process of dialogue in order to create in Afghanistan a broadly representative government reflecting the interests of all Afghans have remained futile. There was one encouraging report: the agreement by the Taliban and the United Front on 2 November to enter into a process of dialogue without preconditions, under United Nations auspices, in order to bring to an end the Afghan conflict by political means. It seemed that, for the first time, the parties had undertaken in writing to seek a political settlement on the basis of an ongoing negotiating process.

But the Taliban have violated that pledge as well. They have not given up hope of resolving the conflict by force of arms and have thus far given no positive reaction to numerous appeals from the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Francesc Vendrell, to agree to the proposed agenda for a political dialogue.

We are gravely concerned at the internationalization of the Afghan conflict and at the involvement of a large number of non-Afghans, particularly from the *madrassahs* in Pakistan. They are not only actively fighting on the side of the Taliban, but are involved in the planning and logistical support of their military operations.

There is no question but that Afghanistan has become a major drug-producing country. Seventy per cent of world drug production comes from Afghanistan. We welcome the international community's efforts to combat the Afghan drug threat. Here, we view as an important practical step the September adoption of a regional plan of action by the

"six plus two" group, with the active participation of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme.

The threat of terrorism from Taliban-controlled territory is particularly dangerous. There, a major bridgehead for international terrorism and extremism has been erected. A great number of international mercenaries are located there; they not only participate actively in the fighting but are also making plans to destabilize the situation in other countries, including neighbouring countries.

The leaders of the Taliban movement openly give financial, military and other kinds of support to Chechen militants and to Uzbek, Tajik, Uigur and other extremists. Probably the most famous modern-day terrorist, Usama bin Laden, is a guest of the Taliban. Despite the many appeals from the international community to extradite this terrorist and put an end to support for, and to close down, the camps that train international terrorists on their territory, the Taliban are continuing their criminal policies.

In October 1999 the Security Council adopted resolution 1267 (1999) which imposed an international sanctions regime on the Taliban movement. Since that time they have been repeatedly warned of the possibility that additional sanctions would be imposed. Unfortunately, they continue to ignore all of the appeals of the international community.

The dangerous activities of the Taliban give every reason to tighten sanctions against their movement — targeted measures that could encourage the Taliban to renounce their support for international terrorism and to embark on a political dialogue both within Afghanistan itself and with their neighbours in the entire civilized world.

We think it is necessary to put a definite halt to the supply of weapons to the Taliban regime, to impose a military embargo on them and to restrict or fully close down the activities of their missions or offices abroad, as well as to freeze the financial assets of bin Laden and introduce an embargo on the supply of the chemical substances that are used to produce drugs.

Naturally, sanctions should not worsen the suffering of the ordinary citizens of Afghanistan. We hear that the sanctions against the Taliban apparently have negative humanitarian effects. It is quite clear that the reasons for the dire humanitarian situation, a situation now on the brink of disaster, lie altogether elsewhere. First and foremost is the continuing fighting, for which the Taliban is to blame. This, on top of the severest drought to hit the country in the last 30 years, is leading to the further destruction of an already war-sapped economic infrastructure.

In this situation, instead of focusing on helping the population of Afghanistan to survive in these difficult circumstances, the Taliban, through their actions, are making the situation even worse by fully shifting the burden for caring for the people of their country onto the shoulders of the international community.

We welcome the efforts of the international community to provide emergency humanitarian assistance to the needy people of Afghanistan. We note that this assistance should be distributed fairly, primarily to those who have suffered as a result of the fighting, as well as in areas that have been hardest hit by the drought.

Russia is concerned that the Taliban, instead of providing every assistance to the personnel of humanitarian organizations, instead of guaranteeing their safety, is hampering the work of those organizations. What is also dangerous is that they do not allow due assistance to be given to the rebel areas and thus use humanitarian assistance for their political objectives. We feel that we must definitely avoid any discrimination here and that we must ensure compliance with the principle of equal access to humanitarian assistance by all who need it.

We believe also that in these circumstances, international humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance to Afghanistan should enhance the efforts of the international community to achieve a speedy political settlement. Clearly, carrying out rehabilitation projects will become possible only when real progress is made in the peace settlement.

For its part, Russia intends to continue to give whatever humanitarian assistance it can to the Afghan people. From 1995 to 2000, Russia's Ministry for Emergency Situations provided humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people to the tune of about $2 million, the overall volume of which was about 200,000 tons. This included foodstuffs, clothing, tents, blankets, dishes and other essential goods.

At the beginning of this year, a special decision was taken to provide food for children, as well as medicines to the people of Afghanistan in the amount of more than $100,000. In November of this year, almost $400,000 was allocated to provide assistance to the people of the north-east region of Afghanistan, which bore the brunt of the fighting. The first consignment was 30 tons of medicines that has already been delivered.

We are also prepared to participate in a practical manner in the de-mining programmes in Afghanistan if appropriate safety is guaranteed and if the fighting stops.

We attach great importance to the adoption today of the draft resolution on Afghanistan, which Russia joined in sponsoring. We reaffirm our willingness to work together constructively with all interested parties in seeking to promote a peaceful political settlement of the conflict in that country on the basis of the decisions taken by the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Mr. Pamir (Turkey): The political and humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan is one of the most preoccupying and pressing problems facing the international community, and the recent developments there are a source of serious concern.

Turkey has deep-rooted historical and cultural ties with the Afghan people. We attach the utmost importance to the preservation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country.

We believe that there can be no military solution to the Afghan crisis, that the only viable way remains the establishment of a broad-based multi-ethnic Government embracing all parts of Afghan society, and that a lasting peace can be achieved in Afghanistan only after a durable ceasefire. This is a crucial requirement to start meaningful negotiations.

The ongoing conflict has been exacerbated by the attempts of one of the parties to gain control of the country through the use of force against legitimate authority. This not only contributes to the perpetuation of the precarious situation in the region, but also provides a fertile ground for threats such as terrorism, drug trafficking and religious extremism which make themselves felt far beyond Afghanistan's neighbourhood.

The overall outlook of the country is in stark contrast to the ideals and principles enshrined in the Charter. Hence, efforts to bring about a solution to the political and humanitarian aspects of the problem have yielded only minimum results. We believe that the international community should no longer remain indifferent to the aggression in Afghanistan and should stand firm against the violation by the Taliban of the ideals enunciated in the Charter. It is high time for the international community and the United Nations to take a more determined stand and effective steps to put an end to the suffering of the Afghan people and to threats that the present situation poses to international peace and security. The United Nations continues to have a central role to play in this respect and should redouble its efforts to secure a lasting ceasefire. Other initiatives aimed at bringing peace and stability to Afghanistan will prove successful if they are pursued in close coordination with the United Nations.

We are deeply concerned by the human rights violations and the discrimination against girls and women, as well as other acts of religious fundamentalism in areas under the Taliban's control. The resumption of fighting by the Taliban last July has added new problems to the already grave humanitarian and human rights situation on the ground and has led to further displacement of the civilian population. Afghanistan is in ruins today. Human and natural resources have been devastated, and basic rights and fundamental freedom of the majority of its people are under constant and flagrant violation. It is necessary to intensify assistance efforts of the relevant United Nations offices and agencies in Afghanistan to help alleviate the conditions of the Afghan people and to mobilize the international community to urgently extend their helping hand.

The prevailing conditions faced by the vast number of internally displaced persons are of alarming proportions, and these people are in urgent need of basic assistance such as food, shelter, heat and medicine. Humanitarian assistance to these internally displaced persons, who are concentrated in the areas administered by the legitimate Government of Afghanistan, must be increased. Furthermore, the funds allocated to the projects to improve the status of women in the Taliban region that for obvious reasons could not be used should be reallocated for women who are participating in social life in northern Afghanistan.

Turkey has provided shelter to displaced families in northern Afghanistan and is extending its humanitarian assistance, especially in the fields of health and education. Our food assistance to the worst-stricken people of Afghanistan is also substantial. We will continue to stand by the Afghan people in their hour of need.

The Afghan people certainly look forward to rebuilding their future in unity and harmony. The tormenting experience they have undergone only vindicates their aspiration to national reconciliation. We should all build on this sense of re-emergence. Turkey, as always, is ready to contribute to such an outcome. It was with this purpose in mind that it sponsored the draft resolution before the General Assembly.

Mr. Kobayashi (Japan): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on this subject, and the delegation of Germany for coordinating the important draft resolutions before us, which Japan is proud to sponsor.

Japan is gravely concerned at the continuing conflict and the worsening humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. The people of Afghanistan are experiencing unspeakable hardships due to the combined effects of conflict and natural disasters. This situation is intolerable.

The Government of Japan pays its highest respect to the staff members of United Nations, other international organizations and non-governmental organizations who are working tirelessly to resolve the situation and to provide assistance to the people of Afghanistan. We request the Secretary-General and the Governments of the relevant Member States to take all possible measures to ensure the safety and security of these people as they courageously carry out their duties, often under extremely dangerous circumstances.

The warring parties must be made to understand that continued fighting will benefit no one and that they must take the course of action that will be best for the Afghan people and the future of the country. We call upon the parties concerned to put an end to the hostilities and to seek a peaceful settlement through negotiations. We must re-emphasize that the conflict in Afghanistan can be settled only through negotiations and with the establishment of a broad-based, multi-ethnic and representative Government. The countries concerned, and neighbouring countries in particular, should not interfere in the conflict, but rather should use their influence on the warring parties to bring the fighting to an end. It is especially important that all concerned stop extending military assistance or supplying arms to the warring parties and that they refrain from any other measures that could prolong the hostilities.

One very regrettable factor in the situation in Afghanistan is the barrier of mistrust that exists between the Taliban and the international community. Although the Taliban has shown some positive moves in response to the concern expressed by the international community — for example by announcing a ban on opium production and by allowing women some access to education — the barrier remains high. We call upon the Taliban to recognize the need to build a relationship with the international community that is based on genuine trust.

As stated in the Secretary-General's report, the Afghan programme cannot be reduced to a single issue. It is not only the conflict itself but also a multitude of related issues including drugs, terrorism, military support from foreign powers, human rights violations, humanitarian issues and sanctions. These issues cannot be resolved by tackling each issue in isolation. Therefore, we emphasize the need for a comprehensive approach by the international community to bring about a lasting solution to the Afghan conflict. From this point of view, Japan supports all efforts aimed at achieving lasting peace in Afghanistan, including the "six plus two" process, the Rome process and the initiative of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. These processes must continue, while maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship with the United Nations peace process.

We welcome in particular the agreement by the two warring parties to initiate a process of dialogue, which was confirmed in October in separate letters addressed to Mr. Vendrell, the Secretary General's Personal Representative and Head of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA). This is a first step towards peace, and we look forward to a positive outcome of the dialogue. Japan is prepared to host this dialogue in the future. UNSMA's role in ensuring continued dialogue between the Taliban and the United Front is more important than ever, and Japan remains ready to continue to contribute personnel to UNSMA.

With a view to supporting the United Nations peace process from an impartial position and to facilitating dialogue between the parties, Japan has seized various opportunities to invite representatives, at various levels, of the parties concerned to Japan to exchange views. We intend to continue these efforts in the future, in cooperation with the United Nations and the international community.

Japan attaches great importance to assistance to Afghanistan because of humanitarian reasons and because we believe that international assistance provides the parties with an incentive to reach a peaceful settlement. Our contributions have been extended chiefly through the framework of the Afghan Support Group. In particular, the Azra programme and the Greater Azra programme, which were implemented with the contributions of the Government of Japan, are regarded as realistic and situation-specific programmes for voluntary refugee repatriation and community development, and they have shown significant results.

We hope that the warring parties will engage in sincere efforts to achieve peace, realizing that the scope of international assistance will be limited as long as the conflict continues. Japan reaffirms its intention to provide further assistance for the development of Afghanistan once peace has been achieved and a broad-based, multi-ethnic and representative government has been established.

Sadly, as we stand here in the United Nations debating the situation in Afghanistan, the people of that country continue to endure tremendous hardships. For the sake of those people, Japan intends to cooperate to the fullest possible extent to achieve peace, stability and development in Afghanistan.

Mr. Farhâdi (Afghanistan) (*spoke in French*): Since the General Assembly last considered the situation in Afghanistan on 17 December 1999 and adopted resolution 54/189, the direct involvement of Pakistani military personnel and non-Afghan combatants in the current conflict in Afghanistan has escalated considerably.

The international community is becoming increasingly aware of the direct involvement of Pakistani soldiers and officers in the continuing armed conflict in Afghanistan. The Secretary-General, in his latest report on Afghanistan of 20 November 2000 (A/55/633), pointed out, in paragraphs 23 and 81, that a considerable number of non-Afghan combatants, mainly from Pakistan, are fighting on the side of the Taliban. In that report, the Secretary-General states also that there is outside involvement in the planning and logistical support of the Taliban's military operations. That is the role played by the Pakistani armed forces.

These observations by the Secretary-General clearly indicate the presence of officers and other armed Pakistani elements who are actively involved in the fighting in Afghanistan, on the side of the Taliban. But the contents of the Secretary-General's latest report are nothing new. Indeed, in 1997 the Secretary-General, in his report dated 14 November 1997, stated in paragraph 18 that United Nations officials reported an unexpected encounter, near Kabul, with a foreign training unit of several hundred unidentified persons.

The presence of Pakistanis and of terrorist training centres in Afghanistan was recognized also by Mr. Paik, the former Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Afghanistan.

Furthermore, paragraph 17 of the Secretary-General's report dated 17 September 1997 (A/52/358) notes the presence of foreign fighters in Afghanistan and states that a number of prisoners taken by the armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan admitted, under interrogation by the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA), that they came from various areas in Pakistan. The battle of Taloqan, which took place last summer and lasted 40 days, was waged not only by the Taliban but by armed Pakistanis, including elements from the regular Pakistani army, along with other foreigners from various countries. Pakistani advisers undoubtedly assured the Taliban that if it waged that battle, it would be able to take United Nations headquarters, and that, as a result, there would be no one left in the Assembly who could speak of its actions. The battle of Taloqan forced tens of thousands of men, women and children to leave their homes. Those refugees must now endure the hardships of winter in their camps.

General Musharraf, the author of last October's military coup, declared himself the Executive Chief of Pakistan. He stated — and here I refer to document A/54/945 of 21 July 2000 — that Pakistan's pro-Taliban policy was due to the fact that the Taliban belongs to the Pashtun ethnic group. He claimed that Pakistan's national security interests required this

support, for both demographic and geographical reasons.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan was surprised by such a declaration — a confession that is unprecedented in the history of Pakistan's foreign policy. Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic country situated at the heart of the Asian continent. Any foreign claim to, or support for, a given Afghan national group can only emanate from a very dangerous intent. All ethnic Afghan groups, including the Pashtun, are firmly united by both history and geography. That history has been marked by the unity of all Afghans against any foreign military invasion. Eminent Pashtuns in Afghanistan already have rejected General Musharraf's declaration.

No ethnic group has an absolute numerical majority within Afghanistan, a country where 34 different languages are spoken. None of Afghanistan's neighbours has the right to incite any ethnic group against another. That could only harm the nation's unity and territorial integrity, as well as regional stability, and any such action should be condemned by the General Assembly. This is true not only in cases where such support for a given ethnic group against another group has racial, linguistic or sectarian dimensions, but also in cases where such backing is used as a pretext for expansionist military intervention, in an attempt to breathe life into the Satanic notion of *Lebensraum*.

The direct and large-scale involvement of Pakistanis in the armed conflicts in Afghanistan is now well known throughout the world. I have given several pieces of evidence of this via the texts I cited previously in response to the propaganda campaign that the Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations conducted on 11 December 2000 via a letter that stated that the Secretary-General was wrong to say that a considerable number of Pakistani fighters were fighting alongside the Taliban and that he was wrong to say that the Pakistanis were not only taking an active part in the battles, but providing strategic and logistical assistance to the Taliban's military operations.

Once again, we ask the Security Council to send a commission of enquiry to Afghanistan and to visit the non-Afghan prisoners — the Pakistanis included — and verify that there is foreign intervention in Afghanistan. If Pakistan is sincere and innocent and renounces its direct participation in the Afghan conflict, it should join with us in pressing for such an enquiry.

The year that is coming to an end has shown the correctness of the opinions that we have stated so many times in the course of the past four years regarding the danger that Talibanism and Pakistan's expansionist military adventure pose to peace and stability in the region. The intensification of tension in Afghanistan is the direct result of the Pakistani intervention. Increasingly the effects of this intervention are being felt in South Asia and Central Asia. The countries of the region have expressed their uneasiness about this during bilateral and multilateral meetings.

We believe that, on the basis of what the Secretary-General has reported, we can state that there are very close ideological, organizational, political and military ties between the network of international terrorists and Pakistan's Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), the Pakistani military-intelligence service. The Pakistani religious schools, or madrassahs, are centres of indoctrination and regimentation used by the ISI to train fighters to carry out military activities. Thus in July 1999, after the retreat of soldiers and extremist fighters from the Kargil region of Kashmir, some of these fighters were transported in Pakistani military trucks north of Kabul in order to strengthen the Taliban armed forces. Pakistani prisoners held in Afghanistan have made unambiguous confessions about this.

The Pakistani aggression, as well as the terrorism and related activities, which is being carried out by a State and which is threatening the security of the region and hindering development and international cooperation, should be denounced, condemned and opposed by appropriate actions. The Pakistani military-intelligence service, the ISI, should be recognized as a criminal organization which is responsible for this war of aggression, for crimes against humanity and for war crimes.

We ask once again that the Security Council prepare a commission of enquiry to verify the aggression of Pakistan in Afghanistan and to present its findings to the Council. Taking into account the Pakistani aggression in Afghanistan, the Council might decide to grant Afghanistan reparations for the physical damage, the loss of human life and the pillaging of Afghani cultural property that have resulted from the war of aggression that Pakistan has carried out since

April 1992. We hope that Pakistan — the true source of the instability, with its centres for the indoctrination and regimentation of terrorists and its role as the source of the tensions in the region — will be the object of future sanctions of the Security Council.

The past year has once again been marked by systematic violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law by the Pakistan-Taliban-bin Laden axis in Afghanistan. The indiscriminate bombing, ethnic cleansing, the scorched-earth policy, discrimination against women and atrocities against civilians go on and on. We gave a detailed accounting of the Taliban atrocities against the Afghani people in our speeches to the Third Committee. The report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, Kamal Hussain, contained in document A/55/346 speaks eloquently on this point.

We greatly appreciate the role of the United Nations, as well as the tireless efforts of the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Francesc Vendrell, and the members of the "six plus two" group — apart from Pakistan, of course — who have been making sincere efforts to achieve lasting peace in Afghanistan. The Islamic State of Afghanistan, aware of the principle of the peaceful settlement of conflicts, sincerely wishes to see established in the country a Government that is fully representative, multi-ethnic and broad-based. Afghanistan also greatly wishes to have good relations with all the neighbouring countries, including Pakistan — that is, relations based on friendly cooperation and mutual respect.

In the draft resolution we read the term *loya jirgah*, which means "grand assembly". The Islamic State of Afghanistan supports this draft resolution. However, the Taliban have firmly expressed their opposition to it, because it runs counter to their ideology to take into consideration the views of the people of the country. The Taliban believe exclusively in military domination of the country — even if this domination is achieved via the intervention of a foreign army and by entering into an alliance with international terrorism.

The international media never stop repeating that three countries have recognized the Taliban. In reality, there is only Pakistan, which created the Taliban and which is thus the only country that recognizes them. The Government of the United Arab Emirates has steadily refused to establish an embassy in occupied Kabul. The staff of the Saudi Arabian embassy in Kabul has been withdrawn for many years, and Saudi Arabia has set significant limits on the activities of the so-called Taliban embassy in Riyadh.

The international media have never stopped repeating that 90 per cent of the territory is under the control of the Taliban. The truth is otherwise. In the occupied provinces, there is an armed resistance to the Taliban and their allies that stretches over at least 25 per cent of Afghan territory. In the rest of the country, the security is such as might be found in a prison, and the peace that of a cemetery. In spite of what was said by the representative who spoke before me, all the girls' schools are closed, and furthermore, even the technical institutes no longer exist. Material and spiritual obscurantism is the order of the day for the Taliban.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan has nothing but fraternal feelings for the people of Pakistan. It is the military junta and the notorious Inter-Services Intelligence — a State within a State — that dominate Pakistani diplomacy and jointly implement a policy of aggression against Afghanistan, which was a Member of the United Nations before Pakistan even existed.

The Pakistani authorities have often claimed, however, that they maintain contacts with our side. In fact, many months have gone by since the Pakistani Government deigned to restore such contact. Obviously, Pakistan, in its own self-interest, must abandon its policy of aggression against Afghanistan for such contact to prove effective in promoting peace and in the best interests of these two neighbouring countries.

In conclusion, I should like, on behalf of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, to convey our most sincere appreciation to the German mission for its tireless efforts in coordinating the elaboration of the draft resolution before us today. We also thank all the sponsors of the draft resolution, now numbering 83, and all those delegations that have supported it.

Mr. Bebars (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): A year ago, the Egyptian delegation delivered a statement on the agenda item which the General Assembly is considering again today. It is regrettable that an entire year has elapsed without any improvement in the humanitarian situation of the war-stricken Afghan people, which has suffered for over 20 years under the scourge of a brutal war that has turned its country into

a safe haven for terrorism and illicit trafficking in poisons and drugs.

The brutal perpetuation of the Afghan conflict, with its devastating humanitarian repercussions, is an expression of the failure of the international community to mobilize the political will necessary to bring the warring factions to the peace table and dialogue, while the impact of the Afghan conflict has overflowed Afghanistan's borders, threatening its neighbours.

Several factors have come together to perpetuate and exacerbate the suffering of the Afghan people. On the one hand, various factions are still fighting to seize and monopolize power; on the other, the country has been stricken by the most severe drought in 40 years. These factors have collectively aggravated the crisis of Afghan refugees, hundreds of thousands of whom have been stranded at the thresholds of other countries, seeking assistance and refuge from the cycle of violence in their own country, while United Nations assistance agencies continue to call for essential financial resources to provide urgently needed food supplies to these unarmed civilian refugees.

In expressing its utmost dismay at the severe humanitarian situation of the Afghan people, particularly the displaced among them, Egypt calls on the entire international community to find an urgent solution to the problem of Afghan refugees and to allow them to be repatriated voluntarily to their homes and exercise their right to live in stable and secure conditions.

I am compelled to refer to the practices undertaken in Afghanistan in the name of religion, particularly the persecution of women and the violations of their rights. I wish to emphasize from this rostrum that Islam is free from all such practices. It is a religion of tolerance, compassion and equality among all human beings, men and women alike. It is not a religion of discrimination and persecution.

In renewing its call on the international community to accord the necessary attention to the situation in Afghanistan, Egypt urges all the warring Afghan factions to heed the voice of reason and conscience and to put the welfare of their country before their own narrow and limited personal interests. We take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General and to his Personal Representative to Afghanistan for their efforts to persuade all factions to engage in dialogue in an attempt to reach a peaceful settlement of the situation in Afghanistan.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): December this year marks the 21st anniversary of the invasion of Afghanistan by the former Soviet Union. That invasion triggered a tragic conflict, which has yet to come to an end.

So much has happened since that fateful December. The Berlin Wall has fallen, the Soviet Union has become history, the free world has expanded, the map of the world has changed, the dawn of the new millennium has arrived and old enemies have become partners. Yet, in Afghanistan, the victims remain the same. The anguish and pain of the people of Afghanistan remain undiminished, while their torment continues unabated.

As we analyse the present situation in Afghanistan, we cannot ignore the history immediately preceding it. The military campaign that was unleashed by the forces of the former Soviet Union in Afghanistan between 1979 and 1989 resulted in the deaths of over 1 million Afghans and forced 5 million more to flee and seek refuge in neighbouring countries. Towns and cities were reduced to rubble and the countryside was turned into a wasteland of minefields. The infrastructure of the country was devastated and, as a direct consequence of that invasion, instability continues to plague the region, while exacting a heavy price from the Afghan people.

Afghanistan was the last and decisive battle of the cold war. It served as a catalyst to release energies that eventually brought about an end to that era of confrontation. Today there are new dynamics which have altered the fundamentals of global relations. The world as we know it today might be different had it not been for the immense sacrifices that the valiant people of Afghanistan made for the cause of freedom and the free world.

With the end of Soviet occupation, the Afghan people rightly expected an environment of peace and reconstruction for their country, with external help and assistance. Unfortunately, the international community did not respond to the legitimate expectations of the Afghan people, who found themselves left by the wayside. After having used them to secure certain strategic objectives, the international community abandoned the Afghan people at a time when they most

needed external support and involvement in order to rebuild their shattered lives. Even today, the Afghan people remain largely ignored and are forced to cope with extreme circumstances in order to eke out an existence.

The origins of the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan go back to the period of foreign occupation and the subsequent neglect by the international community. There was no Marshall Plan for the Afghan people. No concerted effort was made to create conditions conducive to peace and stability by giving the Afghan people an economic stake in their country. As a result, instability took root in Afghanistan, with traditional warlords of varying political and shifting allegiances seeking to assert control over parts of Afghanistan. To date, millions who fled the rigours of war continue to live as refugees in foreign lands. The country remains without any infrastructure, and its economy is in ruins.

International efforts since then to bring peace to Afghanistan have been too little, too late. International construction activities have been negligible at best. In the meantime, the Afghan people continue their slide into greater depths of poverty and deprivation in an environment of instability and insecurity.

Pakistan shouldered the main burden of the decade-long war against the foreign occupation of Afghanistan. We sheltered 4.5 million Afghan refugees during the Soviet occupation and still continue to bear the burden of the ongoing conflict, with the continued presence of over 2 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan. That is the largest concentration of refugees anywhere in the world.

For the past two decades, Pakistan has suffered the most from the instability in Afghanistan. We are continuing to feel its impact. Pakistan, therefore, cannot be immune to developments in that country. We have no option but to deal in the best possible manner with the realities on the ground in Afghanistan, where the Taliban Government is in control of almost 95 per cent of the territory. Given our proximity to Afghanistan, our difficulties as a neighbouring country need to be viewed from that perspective. Pronouncements from afar may appear convenient, but they are flawed in their appreciation of the circumstances that are peculiar to Afghanistan.

Mr. Lelong (Haiti), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We have said before — and I say again — that no country in the world stands to gain more than Pakistan from the return of peace and stability in Afghanistan. Accordingly, we have followed a policy towards Afghanistan that seeks to support and supplement international efforts to promote a peaceful solution to the conflict.

We have extended our full cooperation to the efforts of the United Nations, as well as those of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, out of the conviction that there can be only a negotiated settlement of the Afghan conflict. We continue to believe that a solution must come from the Afghan people themselves. Governments imposed from outside have never been accepted by the Afghan people. No government can be parachuted in from outside in that country. External prescriptions are therefore bound to fail.

We remain convinced that durable peace in Afghanistan can be better achieved through a policy of engaging both Afghan parties and not by ostracizing one party or the other. It is imperative for the international community to maintain its neutrality between the parties and its objectivity in assessing the Afghan situation. To single out one party or another would not yield the desired results. In fact, it would contribute to prolonging the conflict.

While we strongly condemn all acts of terrorism in all their forms, scope and manifestations, whether committed by individuals, groups or States, we do not subscribe to the view that the imposition of sanctions will achieve the intended results. Sanctions are always unjust, unfair and counterproductive. Pakistan itself has been the target of externally sponsored acts of terrorism. We therefore fully share the international consensus on the need to combat this grave threat to our societies through close international cooperation and coordinated and focused measures that target the perpetrators of such crimes, as well as their collaborators.

We do not believe that sanctions are a useful policy tool that can be used, like a scalpel, with precision. Those who have borne, and will continue to bear, the main brunt of sanctions are the people of Afghanistan. It is they who have suffered, and will suffer, both the direct and indirect consequences of sanctions, whether already in existence or yet to be imposed. While such measures may or may not have

the desired impact on the rulers, they will certainly have an adverse impact on the humanitarian situation in that war-ravaged country. This is not just our assessment; it is also that of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and that of Human Rights Watch.

If I may quote from the OCHA report:

> "The high levels of vulnerability in Afghanistan exaggerate the impact of what would ... be fairly insignificant effects of the sanctions regime. The ability of ordinary Afghans to withstand any kind of deterioration in their situation after twenty years of war is extremely limited, and seemingly innocuous actions can have a serious impact on the lives of millions of people."

It is clear that the humanitarian tragedy in Afghanistan will deepen as a consequence of new sanctions that the Security Council is about to impose today. Millions of innocent Afghans who are already suffering from widespread famine conditions in their country due to prolonged drought — the worst in 30 years — will be further exposed to greater deprivation and hardship as United Nations aid agencies and non-governmental relief organizations withdraw from Afghanistan. Impartial aid agencies and relief organizations operating inside Afghanistan are unanimous in their view that the additional sanctions will only further aggravate the humanitarian crisis and tragedy.

The anticipated collapse of the international safety net is forcing further displacement and migration of the Afghan people. In the 23 days up to 14 December, 32,177 Afghan refugees entered Pakistan. Daily reports point to accelerating influx. There is an average of 35,000 Afghan refugees fleeing their homes and seeking refuge in Pakistan every month. Apart from derailing the United Nations-sponsored negotiations between the Afghan parties, which had raised hopes of peace, the additional sanctions that are going to be voted upon this afternoon and that are contained in the draft resolution only threaten to trigger a humanitarian disaster comparable to that which followed the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

There is simply no such thing as smart sanctions. We therefore wonder whether it is prudent or even appropriate to seek to bring a few individuals to justice by subjecting a whole nation to international, political and economic isolation and misery. The 26 million people of Afghanistan have already suffered the rigours of two decades of conflict and have made unparalleled sacrifices for the cause of freedom. They do not need any further suffering. They are now being asked to accept further burdens that are bound to exacerbate the already acute humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

We are also concerned that the sanctions approach is likely to have a negative impact on the still-nascent peace initiative of Secretary-General's Personal Representative, Mr. Francesc Vendrell. We were looking forward to his return to New York in the first week of February, as mandated by the "six plus two" group and the Security Council, to present his assessment of his ongoing efforts to promote a peaceful solution to the Afghan conflict. The recent agreement that he secured from the two main parties to commence negotiations may very well be the first victim of the new sanctions regime. This written undertaking that Mr. Vendrell obtained from both warring sides is contained in the letter of the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly (*A/55/548*), which contains the text as agreed by both sides.

In other words, this precipitous move today will only scuttle the peace process, which the Secretary-General initiated through his Personal Representative in good faith and in all sincerity. In these circumstances, the hope that Mr. Vendrell's peace mission would lead to some results may very well prove to be misplaced. It had been our expectation that the international community would extend support to this peace process and scrupulously avoid steps or measures that could undermine it. The measures that are being enacted today by the Security Council are essentially the result of political expediency and are not based on considerations of peace and stability in the region or the humanitarian situation in Pakistan. They will serve only the narrow and self-serving objectives of a few vested interests.

There is at least one development that we can view with some degree of satisfaction. The "six plus two" group on Afghanistan has initiated a regional action plan to counter illicit drug production and drug trafficking from Afghanistan. We are hopeful that the international community will extend all possible support to this important initiative. In this regard, we are also pleased to note that the Taliban leadership has issued an order banning poppy cultivation throughout the areas under their control. It is now up to the

international community to help the Afghan people through effective and comprehensive alternative development programmes by providing them with alternative means of income and crop substitution assistance to end their economic dependency on poppy cultivation. Without this assistance to the Afghan people, reliance on interdiction of narcotics alone will not suffice to prevent drug trafficking.

I would like to take this opportunity to place on record our deep appreciation to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his untiring efforts to promote durable peace in Afghanistan. The Secretary-General and his Personal Representative have worked assiduously to bring about an early end to the two-decade-old conflict in that war-ravaged country. While the Secretary-General continues to provide leadership to efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Afghan conflict, these are regrettably being hampered by Secretariat officials who lack the capacity to undertake an accurate analysis and objective assessment of the situation in that country, causing avoidable embarrassment to the Secretary-General himself. I think that Mr. Brahimi, in his famous report, has rightly underscored the deficiencies of information analysis and assessment in the Secretariat.

This is not something new or surprising. We have often been provided with reports and documents by the Secretariat that are either incomplete or biased and have never been accorded blanket endorsement by the Member Governments without proper scrutiny and debate. Therefore, there was absolutely no question of giving a blanket endorsement to the report of the Secretary-General on the question that we have in front of us today.

We are disappointed that the Secretary-General's report on Afghanistan, instead of being objective and comprehensive, is partial in both content and intent.

It reflects the opinions of those who insist on looking at the situation in Afghanistan from an skewed angle. The report does not present the whole picture. We have to look at the situation in both a holistic and impartial manner. The United Nations cannot, and must not, unduly take sides in a conflict, especially when it is clear that one side is not completely responsible for the conditions that exist in that country. We hope that the Secretariat will in the future meet the essential requirements of objectivity and impartiality.

I would now like to comment briefly on the draft resolution before the General Assembly in document A/55/L.62/Rev.1. My delegation put forward a number of constructive proposals to help bring about a semblance of balance in the text. Some of them were accepted, while a number of others were not. We fully share the concern with regard to the excesses committed by one party or the other to the conflict in Afghanistan. We do not condone them. However, we are constrained to note that the draft resolution places the primary responsibility for the cumulative ills related to the Afghan situation of the last 21 years on the doorstep of only one party.

That inherent vice of the draft resolution will only strengthen the perception that one party is the victim of unfair discrimination, while emboldening the other side to perpetuate the conflict in the belief that, with outside support, it will eventually emerge as the victor. So what happens? The conflict will be perpetuated. Needless to say, that message from the General Assembly can only further complicate the prospects for durable peace in Afghanistan. That certainly is not the intention of the overwhelming majority of the membership of the United Nations.

Due to those reasons, Pakistan has decided to disassociate itself from draft resolution A/55/L.62/Rev.1. We are not calling for a vote, in order to enable its adoption by the Assembly by consensus. However, to conclude, I do want to take this opportunity to express on behalf of my Government our deep appreciation and gratitude to all the delegations that extended their support and understanding for our position during the discussions on this draft resolution — and there was an overwhelming number of them. We are indeed most grateful for their contribution and cooperation.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/55/L.62/Rev.1, which has two parts. Part A is entitled "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security". Part B is entitled "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan".

I should like to announce that since its publication, the following countries have become

sponsors of the draft resolution: Algeria, Costa Rica, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uruguay.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/55/L.62/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/55/L.62/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 55/174).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 20?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 46.

Agenda item 20 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

Draft resolution (A/55/L.64)

(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Draft resolution (A/55/L.66)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft resolutions before it under agenda item 20 and its sub-item (b).

The Assembly will first turn to draft resolution A/55/L.64, entitled "Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Perfiliev (Director, General Assembly and ECOSOC Affairs Division, Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services): Before action is taken on draft resolution A/55/L.64, I should like to inform members that under the terms of operative paragraphs 15, 17 and 18 the General Assembly calls for putting in place measures for an effective and comprehensive security management system for the personnel of the United Nations system, both at Headquarters and at the field level, including the strengthening of the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator.

Pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 54/192 of 17 December 1999 and 54/249 of 23 December 1999, in which the Assembly recognized the need to review the existing safety and security arrangements for United Nations personnel, the Secretary-General, in his report to the General Assembly (A/55/494), has proposed a number of measures for the improvement of the safety and security of United Nations personnel. Those measures respond adequately to draft resolution A/55/L.64. The report of the Secretary-General, along with the proposals for additional resources, is currently under consideration by the Fifth Committee in the context of agenda item 117, entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001", and agenda item 123, entitled "Human resources management".

Therefore, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/55/L.64, it would not give rise to any additional requirements for the biennium 2000-2001 over and above those already reported to the General Assembly by the Secretary-General in his report contained in document A/55/494, which, as I indicated a moment ago, is currently being considered by the Fifth Committee.

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/55/L.64. I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/55/L.64: Belarus, Bulgaria, Colombia, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Gabon, Georgia, Guinea, Guyana, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Togo.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/55/L.64?

Draft resolution A/55/L.64 was adopted (resolution 55/175).

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/55/L.66, entitled "Assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Liberia". I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, Burkina Faso has become a sponsor of draft resolution A/55/L.66.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/55/L.66?

Draft resolution A/55/L.66 was adopted (resolution 55/176).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 20 and its sub-item (b).

Agenda item 43 (*continued*)

The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

Draft resolutions (A/55/L.33/Rev.1, A/55/L.42/Rev.1)

Reports of the Fifth Committee (A/55/694, A/55/695)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held the debate on this item at its 80th plenary meeting, held on 4 December 2000.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/55/L.33/Rev.1, entitled "United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala". I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/55/L.33/Rev.1: Austria, Belize, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Finland, Germany, Greece, Guyana, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Peru, the Russian Federation and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/55/L.33/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/55/L.33/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 55/177).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/55/L.42/Rev.1, entitled "The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development". I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, Indonesia has become a sponsor of draft resolution A/55/L.42/Rev.1.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/55/L.42/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/55/L.42/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 55/178).

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 43.

Agenda item 29 (*continued*)

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Draft resolution (A/55/L.69)

Amendment (A/55/L.70)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held the debate on this item at its 39th plenary meeting, held on 25 October 2000.

I should like to inform members of a correction to the English version of draft resolution A/55/L.69. In paragraph 15, fourth line from the bottom, the word "President" should read "Presidents".

I call on the representative of Austria to introduce draft resolution A/55/L.69.

Mr. Marschik (Austria): I have the honour today to take the floor in my capacity as representative of the Chair-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to introduce draft resolution A/55/L.69, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe", on behalf of the 37 sponsors listed in the document. In addition, the following States have joined in sponsoring the draft resolution: Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Monaco, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Yugoslavia.

As we approach the end of the Austrian chairmanship of the OSCE, permit me to emphasize that Austria is proud to have had the opportunity to serve in this function in the year in which we are celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act. Based on a broad concept of security and stability which always stressed the role of the individual and the importance of respect for human rights, the ensuing Helsinki process has relied heavily,

and with substantial success, on the cooperation of the States involved.

Today, 25 years later, cooperation between States, but also between international organizations, remains crucial in the attempts to solve the remaining security and stability problems in the OSCE region. As the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE, the Austrian Foreign Minister, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, recalled in her statement during the debate on this item on 25 October, that the need to ensure proper coordination, efficient use of resources and pragmatic division of labour between the institutions of multilateral diplomacy is the particular responsibility of the member States.

Improving and strengthening cooperation with the partner organizations, in particular the United Nations, was therefore one of the main objectives of the Austrian chairmanship of the OSCE. The meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council held in Vienna on 27 and 28 November had as its central theme cooperation between the United Nations, the European Union and the OSCE with regard to the interaction and complementarity of mechanisms for rapid response to international conflicts.

In this respect, Austria would once again like to express its appreciation for the participation of Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette at that meeting. Indeed, the keynote speech of the Deputy Secretary-General at the Vienna ministerial meeting was the high point of a year of very satisfactory cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE.

In the Security Council, Austria, in its capacity as Chair-in-Office of the OSCE, has repeatedly expressed the gratitude of the OSCE for the good cooperation with the United Nations in the various field missions in the OSCE region. In this context, I would also like to pay tribute to the many individuals working for both organizations in the field whose daily close cooperation has proved to be so valuable.

Let me now turn to the draft resolution before us. Clearly, the text has the same structure and methodology as in the years before, and I will therefore make only some very brief remarks.

The draft resolution welcomes in several provisions the excellent cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE, as I have just outlined, and expresses its hope that this process will continue in the future.

Two new provisions, in paragraphs 5 and 6, express support for the recent initiatives of the OSCE in regard to strengthening the role and the protection of the individual, inter alia, by combating various serious transnational security threats that exist in the OSCE region today.

In view of the positive developments in South-Eastern Europe, paragraph 8 welcomes the admission of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the OSCE on 10 November 2000 and commends the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for its commitment to the principles and standards of the OSCE, as well as for its readiness to cooperate with European institutions and with its neighbours.

As in previous years, the main part of the draft resolution then provides information on developments in the OSCE region in the last year, especially in regard to regional conflicts where the United Nations is also actively involved. There is no need for me to go into detail, but I would just like to point out that, naturally, the listing of developments is not exhaustive.

Finally, as regards the procedure, I would like to stress that Austria followed the example of the previous OSCE chairs, which relied on language used in the OSCE and accepted by the OSCE member States. In the General Assembly this language is regularly amended, and the corresponding amendment will subsequently be introduced.

In closing, let me briefly express my personal gratitude for the assistance I received from the United Nations Secretariat as well as the other members of the OSCE troika, Norway and Romania, during the whole year.

As regards the coordination of the draft resolution, I would like to express my thanks to all those delegations that participated in the consultations both in Vienna and here in New York, for their proposals, their flexibility and their patience, which were all necessary to put this text together.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Azerbaijan to introduce the amendment to draft resolution A/55/L.69, contained in document A/55/L.70.

Mr. Kouliev (Azerbaijan) (*spoke in Russian*): Before I introduce the amendment of the delegation of Azerbaijan, allow me to touch on an important matter that has a direct bearing on the item before us.

The delegation of Azerbaijan profoundly regrets that, as occurred last year, the statement made in plenary meeting on 25 October this year by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), covered an entire range of questions facing the OSCE but did not mention a serious problem that is being dealt with directly by the OSCE, namely, the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in and around the Nagorny-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

As a result of this conflict, 20 per cent of the territory of my country — not of Armenia — is still under occupation. Azerbaijan is the only State — I emphasize — the only State in the OSCE area whose territory is occupied by a foreign State. My country, not Armenia, has been compelled to cope with a humanitarian emergency that has caused the exodus of 1 million refugees and displaced persons.

In the report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Internally Displaced Persons, it is noted that the number of displaced persons in Azerbaijan is one of the highest in the world. Approximately one out of every seven people is an internally displaced person or a refugee. This information is contained in document E/CN.4/1999/79/Add.1.

Moreover, in gross violation of the relevant provisions of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, Armenia has started to populate the occupied territories of Azerbaijan in order to change to its advantage the demographic situation in the conflict area. Therefore, I would like to know, if the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE has not touched on this acute problem and acts as if it does not exist at all, how one can explain the appearance of operative paragraphs 15 and 16 in the draft resolution?

Allow me now to introduce the amendment of the delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan to draft resolution A/55/L.69, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe", contained in document A/55/L.70. Unfortunately, it has become a tradition that the delegation of Azerbaijan, year after year, has to submit an amendment to the draft resolution on this item. The amendment we propose largely reproduces the language of resolution 49/13 adopted by the General Assembly without a vote on 15 November 1994. Operative paragraph 8 of that resolution states that the General Assembly

> "*Fully supports* the activities of the Conference aimed at achieving a peaceful solution to the conflict in and around the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Azerbaijani Republic and to alleviate the tension between the Republic of Armenia and the Azerbaijani Republic, and welcomes cooperation between the United Nations and the Conference in this regard".

I need to make two comments on this, the first of which is technical. In 1994, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe was called the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. My second comment is substantive. As members can see when they compare the amendment with operative paragraph 8 of resolution 49/13, the language of the proposed formulation is softer and does not mention the opposing party to the conflict, the Republic of Armenia.

The reasons for putting forward this amendment are still valid and important. It is a matter of principle. The interests sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country are directly affected. Operative paragraphs 15 and 16 of draft resolution A/55/L.69, which relate to this problem, are again different in substance from the language adopted by the General Assembly at the five previous sessions. Nevertheless, acting in a spirit of compromise, the delegation of Azerbaijan has proposed its amendment not to replace operative paragraphs 15 and 16, but as a new operative paragraph. I wish to express our gratitude to the Permanent Mission of Austria for its efforts to accommodate our concern.

Azerbaijan's sovereignty and territorial integrity have been repeatedly reaffirmed by the international community, and primarily by the Security Council in resolutions on the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan: resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993). The previous reports and current report of the Secretary-General on this agenda item, in documents A/50/564, A/52/450, A/53/672, A/54/537 and A/55/98, also clearly state that Nagorny Karabakh is an integral part of Azerbaijan. I wish to draw members' attention to the fact that, as is clear from the points I have made, three main components of

the United Nations — the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretary-General — have reaffirmed the sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country.

Members have before them a small amendment that is vitally important to our country and its future. On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, I appeal to Member States to adopt a position of principle and to vote in favour of the amendment contained in document A/55/L.70.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/55/L.69 and on the amendment thereto contained in document A/55/L.70.

In accordance with rule 90 of the rules of procedure, the amendment is voted on first. The Assembly shall therefore take a decision first on the amendment circulated in document A/55/L.70.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Djibouti, Ecuador, France, Georgia, Germany, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Yemen.

Against:

Armenia.

Abstaining:

Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Congo, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mauritania, Monaco, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Yugoslavia, Zambia.

The amendment was adopted by 62 votes to 1, with 65 abstentions.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/55/L.69, as amended.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri

Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia.

Against:

Armenia.

Draft resolution A/55/L.69, as amended, was adopted by 147 votes to 1 (resolution 55/179).

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote on the resolution just adopted. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Smith (United States of America): First, I would like to express my delegation's appreciation to the delegation of Austria for its work in preparing the resolution on which we have just voted. Secondly, with regard to the amendment proposed by Azerbaijan, I would like to state that my delegation's vote in favour of the amendment is without prejudice to the outcome of negotiations on a settlement of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict.

Mr. Roshdy (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to explain briefly Egypt's vote on the amendment to draft resolution A/55/L.69.

After carefully considering the draft resolution before us today, the delegation of Egypt decided to abide by the recommendations of the coordinator of the item, especially since these recommendations coincide with the 1999 Istanbul Declaration, in whose elaboration the two parties to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict participated. The text also coincides with the language used by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in its statement of 28 November 2000.

Secondly, the draft resolution relates to cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, not to any regional strife or conflicts.

Thirdly, the text does not align itself with any party to the conflict and only welcomes the efforts of the Organization to build confidence between the two parties.

In conclusion, I should like to state that Egypt's vote today has nothing to do with our position on the conflict in Nagorny Karabakh.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 29?

It was so decided.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The Acting President: The Assembly will now consider reports of the Fifth Committee under agenda items 138 (b) and 12. If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee which are before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote or position.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records. May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I also remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that

we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Committee, unless the Secretariat is notified otherwise. This means that, where recorded votes and separate votes were taken, we shall do the same. I also hope that we may proceed to adopt without a vote recommendations that were adopted without a vote in the Fifth Committee.

Agenda item 138

Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East

(b) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/55/681)

The Acting President: The Assembly will consider the report of the Fifth Committee on sub-item (b) of agenda item 138, entitled "United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon".

I now call on the representative of Israel, who wishes to speak in explanation of vote before the voting.

Mr. Jacob (Israel): I should like to note that in principle, Israel supports the continued funding and strengthening of United Nations peacekeeping operations. It is only because of the fourth preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 2, 3 and 14 that Israel is opposed to the draft resolution contained in document A/55/681.

At this time I would like to briefly clarify a few facts relating to the Qana incident. What occurred at Qana in April 1996 was deeply tragic, incurring the loss of life and significant damage to property. The cause of this incident, however, was tragic as well. The cause was the cynical tactics of the terrorist organization, Hezbollah, which used civilians as human shields for its attacks. While Israel had no way of knowing that there were civilians taking refuge in the area, Hezbollah was well aware that its activities would jeopardize the lives of innocent civilians nearby.

As we have previously pointed out, this heinous guerrilla tactic remains in use today throughout the world. Unfortunately, it has also been a tactic that the Hezbollah has used in concert with their other terrorist operations, including the taking of hostages, violent assaults on the diplomatic missions of States and the deliberate targeting of civilian in rocket attacks.

In this case, the rocket attacks were launched from a site less than 300 metres from the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) compound in Qana, in the hope that Israel's exercise of its right of self-defence would draw return fire towards Qana and imperil the safety of the United Nations personnel and the civilians in the area. The decision to place on Israel alone the burden of the cost of the damage resulting from the Qana incident is an unprecedented and one-sided initiative. This sort of initiative has never been directed against any other Member State involved in a conflict in which United Nations peacekeeping operations are deployed.

In this regard, I would like to recall the established practice that resolutions relating to budgetary questions are to be adopted by consensus. Due to the introduction of political elements in the resolution, this established practice has been broken. The responsibility for the failure to achieve a consensus on this issue lies squarely with those who seek to exploit every item on the agenda to advance political objectives.

For these reasons, Israel will vote against the fourth preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 2, 3 and 14, and should these paragraphs be retained, Israel will vote against the draft resolution as a whole.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 11 of its report. The draft resolution is entitled "Financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon".

A single separate vote has been requested on the fourth preambular paragraph and on operative paragraphs 2, 3 and 14 of the draft resolution. Is there any objection to that request? There is none.

I will now put to the vote the fourth preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 2, 3 and 14, on which a single separate vote has been requested. A recorded vote has been requested.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Gabon, Gambia,

Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia.

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Andorra, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tonga, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Yugoslavia.

The fourth preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 2, 3 and 14 were retained by 85 votes to 3, with 47 abstentions.

The Acting President: I now put to the vote the draft resolution as a whole. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia.

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, United States of America.

The draft resolution was adopted by 140 votes to 3 (resolution 55/180).

The Acting President: I give the floor to those delegations who wish to speak in explanation of the vote after the vote.

Mr. Smith (United States): The United States strongly supports the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon as it continues its efforts to implement a difficult and important mandate. However, the use of General Assembly funding resolutions to pursue claims against a Member State is not procedurally correct. We opposed resolutions 53/227, 52/237 and 51/333 in previous years, and resolution 54/267 earlier this year, because they contained sections that require a Member State to pay for costs stemming from the Qana incident several years ago. These resolutions were not consensus resolutions.

Since shortly after the United Nations inception the procedure that has been followed is that the Secretary-General presents and pursues the settlement of claims against a State or States. This procedure has been applied before in the Middle East and continues for peacekeeping-related damage claims in the Balkans. Using a funding resolution to legislate a settlement is inappropriate. It also politicizes the work of the General Assembly's Fifth Committee and should be avoided, both now and in the future.

Mr. Bebars (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Arab Group, my delegation, as Chairman of the Group for December, wishes to explain its vote.

With the adoption of resolution 55/180 today, this is the fifth year in which the General Assembly has called on Israel to bear its responsibility by paying the costs incurred as a result of its aggression on the United Nations headquarters in the Lebanese town of Qana.

The position of the Arab Group is based on two central principles. First, we must not allow a deliberate attack on a United Nations peacekeeping compound to set a precedent in the history of the Organization, whereby an occupying Power deliberately targets a United Nations compound. Member States are called on to bear the burden of the impact of this aggression. That would imply additional and unjustified financial burdens for the Member States and threaten the financial situation of these forces.

Secondly, the sanctity of the principle of maintaining the security and safety of peacekeeping personnel is the cornerstone of the funding of peacekeeping operations. Any hesitation in the implementation of that principle would send the wrong message to those States that violate Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and would allow them to circumvent their responsibility for the safety and security of United Nations peacekeeping personnel. It would also allow them to justify their aggression against the headquarters of peacekeeping forces, which would in turn jeopardize the mission of these forces and prevent them from fulfilling their mandate in accordance with Security Council resolutions.

The Arab Group can only, in a responsible way, express its concern vis-à-vis Israel's disregard of the Secretary-General's letters, in which he seeks reimbursement of the costs incurred as a result of Israel's aggression on the United Nations peacekeeping compound in Qana, amounting to $1,284,336. This sum has been recorded as a debit in the Special Account of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The resolution calls on the Secretary-General to take strict necessary measures to compel Israel to assume its responsibility for reimbursing this sum.

On this occasion, the Arab Group wishes to extend its thanks and appreciation to UNIFIL for the positive role it has played. We also express our gratitude for the many sacrifices its personnel have made in fulfilling their tasks.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Diab (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to thank the representative of Egypt for the statement he has just made on behalf of the Arab Group.

I have asked to speak in reply to the statement made by the representative of Israel and to remind everyone why the General Assembly has adopted the resolution on the financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

This resolution did not come out of nowhere and was not based on invalid premises, as the representative of Israel tried to depict. It arose from a responsibility and obligation forced upon us by the rules and regulations that we follow in the Fifth Committee concerning the financing of United Nations peacekeeping forces throughout the world. The two basic principles followed here are, first, the sanctity of maintaining the security and safety of United Nations peacekeeping personnel, which is the cornerstone in the financing of peacekeeping operations; and secondly, the protection of civilians in armed conflict, as affirmed in the reports of the Secretary-General and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

The resolution adopted today is not, as described by the representative of Israel, an attack by Lebanon on

Israel. Indeed, it is the opposite. The General Assembly has adopted the resolution on the basis of a letter dated 7 May 1996 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council, as contained in document S/1996/337. This letter dictated the specific characteristics of the resolution, as reflected in the following statement of the Secretary-General in it:

> "I view with utmost gravity the shelling of the Fijian position, as I would hostilities directed against any United Nations peace-keeping position. But this incident is all the more serious because civilians, including women and children, had sought refuge in the United Nations compound at Qana." (*S/1996/337, p.1*)

The Secretary-General was very resolute concerning the grave aspects of that incident, which led Lebanon and the Group of 77 to submit the resolution which the General Assembly subsequently adopted. This affirms, first, the deliberate nature of the attack. The report of Major General Franklin van Kappen, assigned by the Secretary-General to investigate this aggression, clearly refers to the deliberate nature of Israel's shelling of the United Nations position.

Secondly, I would refer to the large number of casualties and the sanctity of the place attacked. The deliberate Israeli attack on the United Nations compound in Qana was a massacre in which 102 Lebanese civilians — most of them women, children and the elderly — were killed.

Thirdly, disregarding the sanctity of the principle of the safety and security of United Nations peacekeeping forces will send the wrong message to the occupying Power and encourage it to continue neglecting the security of United Nations peacekeeping forces. This in turn will unjustifiably threaten the future of United Nations peacekeeping forces and endanger the lives of the personnel and of the civilians whom they protect.

Fourthly, this draft resolution must be implemented if we are to maintain the credibility of General Assembly resolutions, since, for the fifth year in succession, Israel has failed to pay the costs of its aggression and has not responded to letters from the Secretary-General in this respect.

Fifthly, we must ensure that the peacekeeping forces are properly funded so that they can carry out their mandate in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Mr. Jacob (Israel): I believe that in my previous statement I fully clarified the position of my Government with regard to the incident that took place at Qana in 1996, and I am not going to repeat my previous statement. However, the representative of Lebanon also spoke about the need for countries to live up to their obligations and about reports issued by the Secretariat and the Secretary-General, and I would like to make a statement in this regard.

I should like to recall that in May of this year Israel completed its withdrawal from Lebanon, in full compliance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978). This withdrawal was subsequently confirmed by the Secretary-General and endorsed by the Security Council, which referred to it in Security Council resolution 1310 (2000). It must be recalled that Security Council resolution 425 (1978) calls not only for the withdrawal of Israeli forces but also for the restoration of international peace and security and the return of the effective authority of the Government of Lebanon in the area. Furthermore, I would like to recall that, in paragraphs 6 and 7, resolution 1310 (2000) calls upon the Government of Lebanon

> "to ensure the return of its effective authority and presence in the south, and in particular to proceed with a significant deployment of the Lebanese armed forces as soon as possible ... and ... to ensure a calm environment throughout the south".

Now that Israel has fully fulfilled its obligations in accordance with Security Council resolutions, the responsibility for ensuring peace and security in the area lies primarily with the Government of Lebanon. Clearly, this must include preventing acts of violence and aggression directed against Israel. The Government of Lebanon has failed to fulfil this obligation, which has resulted in numerous violations of the blue line. The most serious of these violations include the kidnapping of three Israeli soldiers on 7 October; an attempt at infiltration by heavily armed terrorist cells on 20 October; and the killing of an Israeli soldier by a roadside charge on 16 November. We call once again upon the Government of Lebanon to fulfil its obligations and to prevent all terrorist activities emanating from its territory aimed at the State of Israel.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Lebanon, who wishes to speak a second time in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind delegations that statements are limited to five minutes for the second intervention.

Mr. Diab (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): I apologize for having to speak for the second time in exercise of the right of reply. However, as usual, the representative of Israel has failed to address the main issue under consideration, and instead moved to another issue that has no relevance to the work of the General Assembly today. The Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon has no bearing on Israel's responsibility for the massacre at Qana. Once again, we would like to reaffirm that it is imperative for Israel to fulfil its obligation, as set out in General Assembly resolutions, to abide by the principle of the protection of civilians and to ensure the safety and security of United Nations peacekeeping forces and their personnel. When Israel has done all that it will have implemented its obligations in accordance with this resolution.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Israel, who wishes to speak a second time in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Jacob (Israel): I am fully aware of the lateness of the hour, and I do not intend to take too much of the time of the General Assembly. However, the representative of Lebanon spoke about the acts of aggression committed by Israel in 1996. I think his baseless allegations should be set against the recent record of the Government of Lebanon with regard to encouraging terrorist activities from Lebanon against Israel. This, I think, says more than anything else about the credibility of his allegations.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 138.

Agenda item 12 (*continued*)

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/55/662)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now consider the report of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 12, dealing with those chapters of the report of the Economic and Social Council which were allocated to the Fifth Committee.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 4 of its report.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of those chapters of the report of the Economic and Social Council which were allocated to the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

Programme of work

The President in the Chair.

The President: I should like to inform members that on Thursday, 21 December 2000, in the morning, the General Assembly will resume its consideration of agenda item 27, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity", agenda item 30, entitled "Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, including measures and recommendations agreed upon at its mid-term review", and agenda item 50, entitled "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa", for the purpose of taking action on the draft resolutions before the Assembly under those agenda items.

I should like to reiterate my intention that on Thursday morning all outstanding matters concerning plenary agenda items for this part of the session will be dealt with by the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 1.40 p.m.